of the minority problem contained in it was satisfactory. When the Treaty was ratified, it would firmly establish on a contractual basis a French influence which the too-long maintenance of an authoritarian régime might in the long run compromise.

3

In Lebanon the signature of the Franco-Lebanese Treaty was welcomed by the Maronites and some other sections of the population. The Sunnis, however, regarded it as a blow to their aim of reunion with Syria; their anger found expression in communal clashes in Beirut and elsewhere at the end of 1936. In spite of their opposition, however, steps were immediately taken to carry out the policy of the Treaty by re-establishing self-governing institutions. The Constitution of 1926 was restored in January, 1937; the Chamber met, and Khair ad-Din al-Ahdab, a Sunni, formed a Ministry. But it soon became apparent that the signature of the Treaty and the revival of constitutional forms had not affected the essential nature of Lebanese political life, which continued to be dominated by sectarian issues.

A new electoral law was passed in 1937, replacing the existing Chamber by a new and larger one, two-thirds elected on a sectarian basis and one-third nominated. The elections of November, 1937, were marked by corruption on an extensive scale; and the Chamber which resulted from them, and which remained in being until 1939, was remarkable only for the bitterness and complexity of its internal dissensions. The Ministries of the Amir Khalid Shihab and Abdullah al-Yafi succeeded those of Khair ad-Din al-Ahdab, and none of them had any notable legislative or other advance to show.

The consequence of this was a general loss of interest and faith in the constitutional system as it existed in Lebanon. It was not simply that the established leaders and the parliamentary parties, the Unionists, Constitutionalists and so on, ceased to possess even so limited a hold over public opinion as they had perhaps had; more than that, Lebanese began to ask themselves what purpose was served by the existence of a costly Parliament, filled with landowners and lawyers, wasting its time in internecine quarrels and showing no effective interest in the country's welfare. Had not Lebanon been better ruled under the simple system which had existed

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L 648 There flow from this a certain number of rights and obligations, among them in particular those stipulated below.'

The remainder of the proclamation was substantially the same, with minor and verbal variations, as the proclamation of Syrian independence.[1]

This declaration was received lukewarmly by the greater part of the population. It was open to objection on various grounds. Those who advocated the union of Lebanon with Syria regarded the proclamation as a repudiation of the promise contained in Catroux's statement of June 8th, that the Syrians and Lebanese would be free to form themselves into separate States or to unite into a single State. They objected also to the assertion that Lebanon was politically and territorially an indivisible unit. A similar statement had appeared in the Syrian proclamation and had there been open to no objection; but in the Lebanese proclamation it was taken to imply that any modification of the frontiers between Syria and Lebanon was out of the question.

Furthermore, all those who were opposed to the maintenance of French control, whether they were believers in Lebanese, in Syrian or in Arab nationalism, resented the references to France's 'mission' in the Levant and the statement that the future treaty would be negotiated on the basis of the Treaty of 1936.

L 645 These criticisms were not lessened when it was announced that a Ministry had been formed, with Ahmad ad-Da'uq as Prime Minister, and composed of colourless personalities without any claim to represent the population.

12

S 648 The British Government approved of the Free French policy of proclaiming Syrian and Lebanese independence, and gave its formal recognition to both the newly independent States, in the shape of letters of congratulation sent by His Majesty King George VI, to the Syrian President on October 27th, 1941, and to the Lebanese on December 26th.

In February, 1942, Major-General Sir Edward Spears, who had been connected with the Free French movement since its beginning, and had been in the Levant as head of the 'Spears Mission' since 1941, was appointed first British Minister to the Syrian and Lebanese Republics.

[1] For the French text, see Appendix A13.

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The members of the Ministry were respectively Sunni Moslem, Greek Orthodox, Maronite, Greek Catholic, Druze and Shi'i. Thus the convention which had grown up that the Cabinet should include representatives of all the more important sects was respected. The Ministers, however divided though they might be in religious allegiance, were united in desiring on the one hand a greater measure of self-government for Lebanon, and on the other closer relations between Lebanon and Syria.

17

Iraq recognized the independence of Syria in August and of Lebanon in October. In September the Egyptian Government announced its decision to recognize Lebanese independence and to establish legations in Damascus and Beirut. The Sa'udi Arabian Government also declared its intention to set up a legation in Damascus. These three Governments showed in this and in other ways their satisfaction with the restoration of constitutional rule in the Levant States.

These steps made possible a serious attempt by the Syrians and Lebanese to define their relations with each other, with France, with the other Arab countries and with the United Nations.[1]

[1] More recent events are summarized in the Postscript.

648 of November 11th with the exception of that which declared
669 the constitutional amendments null and void.

5

S 648 The acute crisis was now over, but the problem from which it had sprung was still unsolved. When the Lebanese Chamber re-assembled, the Premier asserted his Government's view
L 648 that the reforms of November 8th were still in force. Moreover, the Syrian authorities lost no time, once the tension in Lebanon was relaxed, in taking parallel action. At an extraordinary session of the Syrian Chamber on January 24th, 1944, the President of the Republic and the Deputies took an oath of allegiance to a new Constitution which comprised Articles 1-115 of the existing text. The effect of this was to annul Article 116. Earlier, on December 1st, the Syrian Premier had declared that Syria did not recognise the Mandate, and was not willing to conclude a Treaty as a condition of the transfer of powers which properly belonged to her; had demanded the surrender by the French of all the attributes of sovereignty, under those limitations only which were necessitated by the state of war; and had affirmed that the Syrian and Lebanese Governments were in agreement on the administration of the common interests.

The C.F.L.N. left these claims and assertions unchallenged, and announced that General Catroux would again go to Beirut, this time for the purpose of negotiating with the two Governments on the transfer of powers. The negotiations resulted in an agreement, concluded on December 22nd, which provided that the powers previously exercised by French authorities in the name of the Syrian and Lebanese Governments should be transferred to their control. They would take over the services included in the category of Common Interests as from January 1st, and other powers by specific agreements still to be concluded. Thus, by the beginning of 1944, the two States had survived a sharp test of their will to independence and had extended the range of their autonomous administration.

6

S In the course of the year 1944 there were a number of
L changes in the political situation in Syria and Lebanon.
645 Some of these changes were of no more than local importance.

Thus, in October the Ministry of Saadullah al-Jabiri in Syria was replaced by that of Faris al-Khuri, who had previously been President of the Chamber; the change was made for internal political reasons, and the new Government was composed largely of the same Ministers and followed the same general policy as its predecessor. In April, 1945, the Ministry was reconstructed. In Lebanon, too, there was a ministerial change: in January, 1945, the Government of Riyadh as-Sulh was replaced by that of Abdul-Hamid al-Karami, a Sunni Moslem deputy from Tripoli.

A change affecting the structure of the Syrian Republic took place in September, with the incorporation of the province of Jebel Druze fully in the Syrian State. It had already been formally incorporated in February, 1942, but had preserved a special administrative and financial régime which was now abolished. This step was taken at the request of the Administrative Council of Jebel Druze. A similar step was not taken in the Alawi province; although there was a party in favour of it, the forces of separatism were still strong, and the situation was complicated by the existence of disorder and unrest fomented by Sulaiman Murshid and his associates.

Other changes of greater importance, because they affected more immediately the problem of Franco-Lebanese and Franco-Syrian relations, were the transfer of power to the Syrian and Lebanese Governments and the financial agreement of February, 1944:

(i) In accordance with the agreement made by General Catroux with the two Governments on December 22nd, 1943, a series of particular agreements was negotiated during 1944, and by the end of the year almost all the services in question had been formally handed over, including the Customs Administration, the Financial and Economic Services, the control of the tobacco monopoly and concessionary companies, the Press Censorship, the Bedouin control and the 'Sûreté Générale' (although a French 'Sûreté aux Armées' was retained). These transfers gave the two Governments almost all the attributes of independent governments. At the end of 1944 the only important attribute which had not been transferred was the control of the local levies, the 'Troupes Spéciales'.